

Chronic Disease Indicators: Indicator Definition



Visits to dentist or dental clinic among adults aged ≥ 18 years

Category:	Other Diseases and Risk Factors
Demographic Group:	Resident persons aged ≥ 18 years.
Numerator:	Respondents aged ≥ 18 years who report having been to the dentist or dental clinic in the previous year.
Denominator:	Respondents aged ≥ 18 years (exclude unknowns and refusals).
Measures of Frequency:	Annual prevalence — crude and age-adjusted (standardized by the direct method to the year 2000 standard U.S. population, distribution 9*) — with 95% confidence interval.
Time Period of Case Definition:	Previous year.
Background:	In 2002, approximately 69% of adults reported having had a dental visit in the past year.
Significance :	Regular use of the oral health-care delivery system leads to better oral health by providing an opportunity for clinical preventive services and early detection of oral diseases. Infrequent use of dental services has been associated with poor oral health among adults.
Limitations of Indicator:	Indicator does not convey reason for visit or whether dental care was actually received.
Data Resources:	Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). http://www.cdc.gov/nohss/
Limitations of Data Resources:	As with all self-reported sample surveys, BRFSS data might be subject to systematic error resulting from noncoverage (e.g., lower telephone coverage among populations of low socioeconomic status), nonresponse (e.g., refusal to participate in the survey or to answer specific questions), or measurement (e.g., social desirability or recall bias).
Healthy People 2010 Objectives:	21-10: Increase the proportion of children and adults who use the oral health-care system each year.

* See Klein RJ, Schoenborn CA. Age adjustment using the 2000 projected U.S. population. Hyattsville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, 2001. Healthy people 2010 statistical notes, no. 20. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/statnt/statnt20.pdf>